

Symposium Coordinators Report

Since taking this position on a year ago I have started to get a better idea of what is required, and where the symposium program stands now.

The current symposium in Cleveland is going full speed right now; Scott has done a great job in his promotion materials and web site information. I will encourage this coverage in future symposiums. The Room block is close to being met, but attendance is extremely low. I contribute much of this to the changes in the society and the general economic condition of the nation.

Dan is right on schedule for Saratoga. We will be reducing the hotel room block numbers to better represent the current symposium numbers. Dan has already put together much of the required information, contracts and schedule for the symposium.

We have signed a contract for the 2005 Chicago symposium at the Indian Lakes resort in Bloomingdale, IL. The hotel is a 15-Minute drive from the Chicago Airport, numerous food and shopping establishments within a 2 mile radius. Joe Gregar will chair this symposium; his many years of contributions to the society will be a great asset in 2005.

If we plan to continue with yearly symposiums, I am looking at the Southern CA to host the 2006 symposium.

It is becoming clear that we need to adjust our symposium ideas. The symposium attendance like the society has been cut in half over the last 4 years. I am working on keeping better and more useful numbers for the symposiums. We have recorded the number of attendees to the symposiums over the years, this number contains ASGS members, family's, Vendors, and exhibits only pass. Using this number the 2001 symposium drew 313 attendees and the 2002 symposium drew 189. This is in contrast to the 1999 and 2000 symposiums that drew over 500 attendees.

To break this number down for 2002 we had approximately 111 ASGS members attend, the remaining 89 people were vendors and family. Of the 111 members that attended we filled 62 seminar spaces including the regular seminar. In 2002 we failed to fill the regular member seminar, this is a first. In 2001 we filled over 100 seminar spaces and this is much lower than previous years.

Working with Joe on the 2005 symposium, I reduced the attendance numbers drastically, however our meeting space and other hotel requirements remain about the same. We are not that big of a fish for hotels anymore, we bring in a minimal number of room nights in relation to the meeting space we require. Due to current economic times we secured 2005 at a very good rate, but I foresee problems in the future.

I need some board direction for future symposium plans.

Here are the current problems I see.

- 1) Lower symposium attendance
- 2) Fewer presenters, All the Seminars are getting much less attendance, this is mostly due to fewer attendees.
- 3) Harder to find symposium chairs.
- 4) Fewer Vendors are willing to exhibit.

Here are some options I see possible; I am open to others as well.

- 1) Continue of as we have been, but expect smaller attendance and participation in the symposiums.
- 2) Shorten the program to a three-day symposium; this might help to keep attendance cost lower?
- 3) Start a Bi-Yearly symposium program. We could meet in the off years at one of the larger section meetings.
- 4) Work with another group to combine our interest and symposium.

Some Basic figures for Symposium attendance.

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Attendees	Over 500	313	189	~ 160
ASGS Members	-	-	111	84
Seminars Including Regular Member		130	62	88
Regular Member Seminar	24	35	~20	14
Junior Member Seminar	12+	12+	~11	8

Each of the last many years has produced a profit for the Society.

Until year 2002 and 2003 we have always filled the Regular member and Junior member seminar programs. We have also noted a decrease in Spouses and Family attendance.

I need some direction from the Board on what approach we should take. I am willing to put the time into one of these options, however we need to decide which direction to go.

Ron Bihler

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